

URGENT ACTION

BLOGGERS HELD FOR CONDEMNING CORRUPTION

Bloggers Cheikh Jiddou and Abderrahmane Weddady were arbitrarily arrested on 22 March in Nouakchott. Both were arrested after posting comments on Facebook condemning corruption. Their comments came after media articles were published, accusing some Mauritanian officials of corruption. The two bloggers have been charged with 'malicious accusation'. On 27 March, they were transferred to the Central prison of Nouakchott.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz
President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
Office of the president
BP 184
Nouakchott, Mauritania

Your Excellency,

I am concerned about the arrest of bloggers **Cheikh Ould Jiddou** and **Abderrahmane Weddady**.

The two bloggers were arbitrarily arrested on 22 March by the economic crimes police in Nouakchott. This is after they posted comments on Facebook condemning corruption. Their comments came after media articles were published alleging that some Mauritanian officials had acquired wealth illegally and stashed it abroad.

They were detained by the economic crimes police until 27 March, when they were taken to the prosecutor of West Nouakchott for questioning. Afterwards, they were transferred to the Central prison of Nouakchott. They have been charged with 'malicious accusation'.

Previously, the two had been questioned over the Facebook comments by the economic crimes police on 7 March and had their national ID cards and passports confiscated after the questioning.

I urge you to ensure that:

- Cheikh Ould Jiddou and Abderrahmane Weddady are immediately and unconditionally released as they have been detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom expression;
- Their identification documents are returned to them immediately;
- The right to freedom of expression is fully respected, protected, promoted and fulfilled in Mauritania.

Yours sincerely,

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Abderrahmane Weddady is a high-profile Mauritanian blogger.

Cheikh Jiddou is a blogger and a founder of the youth [movement '25 February'](#).

On March 22, the economic crimes police arrested the two bloggers after they responded to their summons for questioning. The office of the prosecutor in Mauritania said in a statement published the same day that information about the seizure and freezing of Mauritanian funds are "absolutely not true" and "investigations will continue on the source of this false information".

Before their arrest, international and national media including Al-Jazeera, Al-Quds and Al-Arabiya published articles alleging that authorities in the United Arab Emirates had frozen an account containing two billion dollars that was set up by persons close to the Mauritanian government. The two bloggers posted comments on Facebook condemning the alleged corruption based on information share in the media articles.

On March 7, Weddady and Jiddou were first questioned as witnesses by the economic crimes police following a lawsuit filed by some civil society organizations active against corruption and asking for justice to investigate alleged ill-gotten wealth involving some Mauritanian senior officials.

The police searched at Jiddou's and Weddady's house without a warrant on 25 March. They confiscated Weddady's computer.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: [French]

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [24 05 2019]

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: [Cheikh Jiddou (he/his); Abderrahmane Weddady (he/his)]

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: [N/A]